

CRISIS IN THE BALKAN PENINSULA

THE Belgrade correspondent of the London Times in a recent article gives an interesting description of the Serbian army, which is of special value just now in view of the serious situation in the Balkan peninsula, as disclosed by the cables dispatches. During a visit to Belgrade the writer obtained from Serbian officers full particulars about the Serbian army, and was enabled, through the courtesy of General Stepanovitch, Minister of War, to see something of the work of the Belgrade garrison. The officers consulted were most kindly disposed and anxious to afford all information in their power. No questions were of course asked regarding matters which are understood to be of a confidential nature, and it may be stated at once that the facts which will be given in this and in succeeding letters are perfectly well known to the general staff of every army in Europe. Owing to existing facilities for international intercourse, the progress of armaments can no longer be kept secret. Fortifications remain a closed book, but for the purposes of modern war fortresses may be regarded as a quantity negligible.

In Serbia, military service is obligatory on all able-bodied men from 21 to 45 years of age. According to an authentic Austrian publication, the number of young men reaching the age of 21 every year is approximately 25,000, of whom, after deducting absentees and those medically unfit, about 18,000 remain available for conscription. Nearly half of this number are taken for the full period of color service, the other half being enrolled for shorter periods according to their occupation in life. In the infantry the period of color service is only 18 months; in the cavalry and artillery, two years. Serving men are divided into three classes or bans, as shown in the following table:

No. of Class.	Age of Men.	Approx. Nos. in each Class.
Class I.	21 to 31	160,000
Class II.	31 to 37	80,000
Class III.	37 to 45	50,000
Total No. trained and partially trained men available for mobilization		290,000

Class I. provides men for the colors during peace and reservists to complete the cadres on mobilization. Class II. provides reinforcements for the active army in the field as casualties occur. From this class, also, it is intended to raise certain additional units during war, but as far as can be ascertained, no definitely organized cadres exist for this purpose during peace. Men of Class III. are not available for the field army, except when fighting within Serbian territory. The numbers given in the third column of the above table are paper figures, and on mobilization would probably bear a reduction of nearly 10 per cent. Consequently Serbian fighting strength of trained men for a campaign outside Serbian territory, taken from Classes I. and II., may be estimated at 220,000, about 45,000 men from Class III. remaining available for the home garrisons.

How are those 220,000 men organized? Serbia is divided into five territorial divisional districts, as shown in the accompanying sketch, with headquarters at Nish (1st Division), Valievo (2nd Div.), Belgrade (3rd Div.), Kracujevatz (4th Div.), and Zaichar (5th Div.). The division, which has an unusually large effective establishment, is the unit for mobilization purposes, and is in fact a small army corps, taking the field with a full complement of administrative and technical units. It is built up as follows. Each divisional district is subdivided into four regimental districts. Each regiment has a peace strength of three and a war strength of four battalions, giving a total war strength of 16 battalions (16,000 men) to the division. There is a regiment of artillery for each division, consisting of nine batteries, giving 54 guns to the division. No divisional cavalry is kept up during peace, but on mobilization each division will have a cavalry regiment of four squadrons (400 sabres), raised in the district from men and horses all previously registered. Without giving the detailed numbers of the various administrative and technical units, it may be stated that the total strength of the division is about 23,000 officers and men, giving a mobilized strength of about 115,000 for five divisions with 2,000 sabres and 270 guns.

In addition to the troops of the five territorial divisions there is a cavalry division composed of two brigades, each of two regiments. The nucleus of this force is maintained during peace, the divisional headquarters being at Belgrade with the 2nd Brigade, while the 1st Brigade is at Nish. The war strength of the cavalry division is 80 officers and 3,200 sabres. Two horse artillery batteries (eight guns) will accompany the cavalry division in the field.

Besides the artillery allotted to each division there are six howitzer batteries, and six mountain batteries, together with two battalions of fortress artillery. All these units are capable of immediate mobilization.

When added to the five territorial divisions these troops bring the total mobilized strength of the Serbian Army up to about 125,000 officers and men, with 5,200 sabres, and 330 guns. This represents the striking force which Serbia could concentrate on her frontier within a few days of the date when mobilization takes place. The figures given may be taken as approximately correct, in view of the

exaggerated statements which have been put forward regarding the strength of the Serbian army. In Veltze's Armee-Almanach, Captain Hugo Kerchnawe, of the Austrian General Staff, gives the strength of the field army as 158,000 men; but there are not sufficient organized cadres to absorb this number of men, although supplementary units will doubtless be created, as time permits, and if the campaign continues, from the balance of men (95,000) of Classes I. and II., for whom there will be no room in the field army.

What finally is the fighting worth of the Serbian Army when mobilized? Smart in appearance, well dressed, well spoken, Serbian officers are, as a rule, well educated, particularly those who have been trained at foreign military schools. About two-thirds of them pass through the Belgrade Military Cadet school; the remaining third being commissioned from the ranks; but few of the latter rise to high position in the army. The men are nearly all recruited from the peasant class. For fighting purposes, the Slav is inferior to the Teuton. Physically and mentally, Serbian soldiers are unequal to German conscripts; but they are patient, sober, hard-working and easily disciplined. Their demeanor before their officers is all that it should be. Drill in the Serbian army is surprisingly smart, but drill is only the foundation of military training, and of this little was seen or heard by the writer. Content with surface drill, which is a means, not an end, Serbian officers hardly seem to appreciate at its full worth the value of that rough field spade-work which is the first postulate of present-day fighting.

procedure of their antecedent education. The Sofia Military School is organized on a dual basis. There is a junior branch for the general education of officers' sons, and a senior branch for the technical training of military cadets. The boys enter the junior branch at 12, and those who wish to become officers move up to the senior branch at the age of 16 or 17. Both branches are under the same roof, but have different curricula and separate officers. The system is not quite satisfactory, and it is intended to abolish the junior branch, military cadets being in future drawn from the civil schools after an entrance examination. General Dikoff thinks that by this altered system the cadets would be more liberally educated on broader lines than they are at present, and that the entrance examination would secure a keener spirit for work than is now the case. The school buildings are capable of accommodating 600 pupils, while the class rooms are as completely equipped as are those of Woolwich and Sandhurst. There is a very large riding school, and an establishment of 150 horses for the use of the cadets. The topographical drawings of the cadets were particularly good, showing a general level of all-round excellence. What was also specially apparent was the high tone of the officer-instructors. Well commanded, and admirably staffed, the Sofia Military School is doing excellent work in preparing young Bulgarian officers for their future duties. There is at present no Bulgarian staff college, officers intended for the staff being sent abroad to study at foreign military colleges.

After seeing the military school a visit was

ROUGH SKETCH SHOWING STRATEGICAL FRONTIERS OF BULGARIA AND HEAD QUARTERS OF TERRITORIAL DIVISIONS.



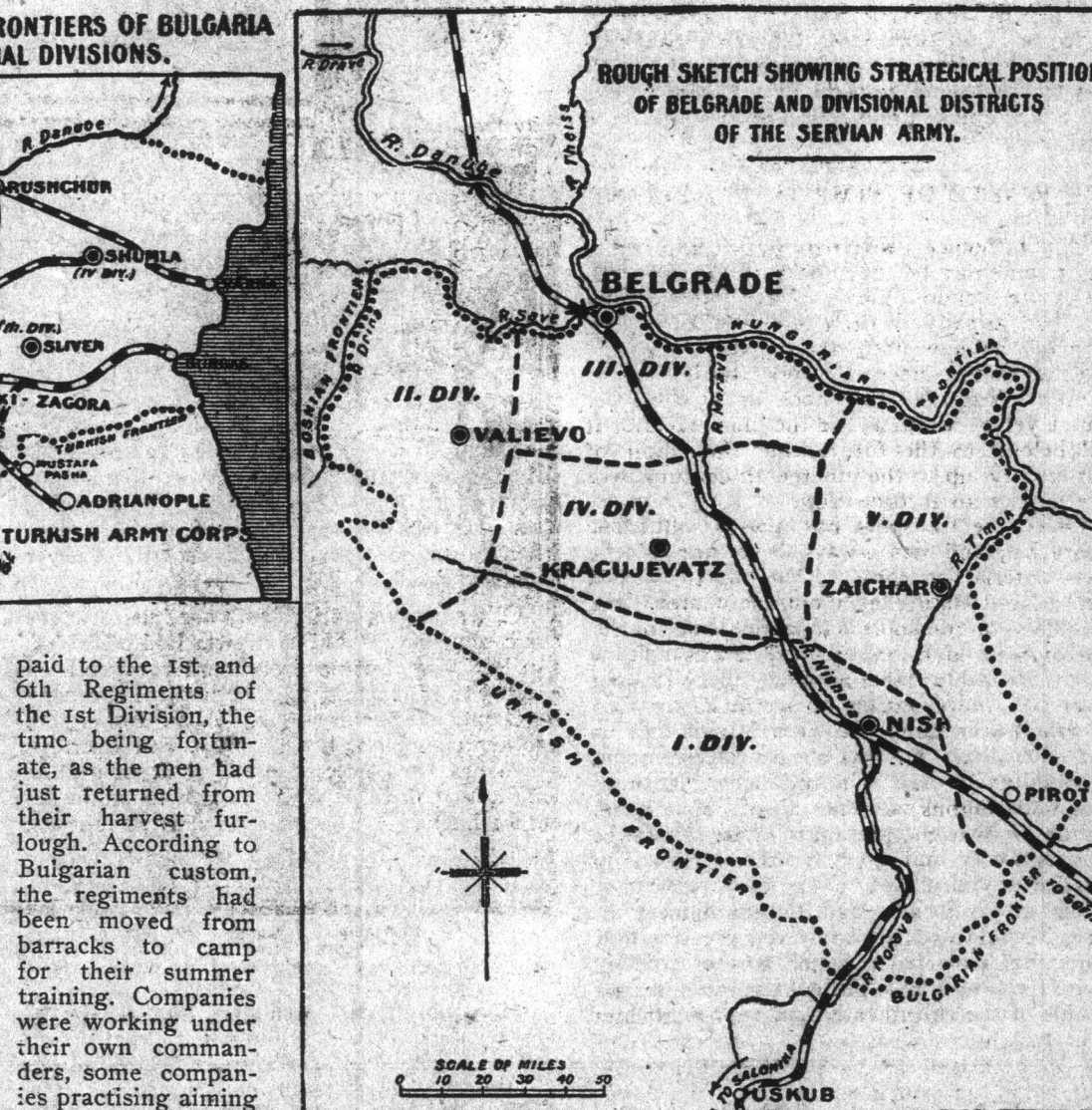
But the weak point of the Serbian Army is not so much want of training as want of moral. The officers are pessimistic about the future. The shadow of Austrian intervention is always hanging over them. "We can do nothing without leave from Vienna," was everywhere the cry, and not the less bitter because Austrian intervention saved Serbia from the consequences of her defeat by Bulgaria in 1885. The battle of Slivnitsa dealt a serious blow to the prestige of the Serbian army. That prestige received a second stroke when the cruel murder of Serbia's King and Queen by conspirators of the Belgrade garrison was allowed to go practically unpunished. What steps ought to be taken to restore moral to the Serbian army are best known to the Serbian people; for in their hands, and not in those of other nations, the "sin and the saving lies." If they will purge themselves of the "perilous stuff" which at present weighs upon their hearts, and paralyses all efforts for national progress, they need have no fears about Austrian intervention, and they will recover the regard of Europe.

Belgrade and Sofia

No two towns could present a greater contrast than Belgrade and Sofia—the one dull, sleepy, and sordid, the other busy, bustling, and progressive. As with the towns, so with the people; the former, talkers and loungers, the latter, doers and workers. Whatever the origin, history, and racial developments of the Serbs and Bulgars may have been in the past, there can be no assimilation between them in the future, for year by year the gulf between the two is growing wider and deeper. Educationally, commercially, industrially, the Bulgarians are proving their superiority over their Serbian neighbors. What they can do in war remains to be seen, but during peace they are avowedly preparing with all their might to realize their national aspirations.

It was well said by Marshal Oyama that the victory of Mukden was the triumph of Japanese national education. The Bulgarians have as great a passion for education as the Japanese, and have made strenuous efforts to educate the youth of the nation. The money spent on education is well invested. Naturally slower minded than the Serb, the Bulgar conscript is better educated, and therefore easier moulded under the influence of military training.

The Bulgarians are proud of their army, and enjoy showing it to interested visitors. The door is thrown open without any arrière-pensée, no attempt being made to exaggerate what is good, or to conceal defects. One of the first visits made was to the officers' military school, which is now under the direction of General Dikoff, late Chief of the Bulgarian General Staff. The fighting worth of military officers largely depends on the methods and



are careful, calm, methodical, rather slow but very sure; and the men respond accordingly. Bulgarian peasants make excellent infantry soldiers, their marching powers being above the average of European infantry. In 1885, when the Bulgarian army had to be transferred at short notice from the Turkish to the Serbian frontier to repel King Milan's invasion, the infantry regiments made a forced march to Slivnitsa of nearly 60 miles in 26 hours before attacking the Serbian army. This is as good as any march on record. The Bulgarian infantry work tremendously hard while with the colors. Nominally enrolled for two years, owing to the two periods of harvest furlough, the conscripts are actually only 21 months under training. Not much time is spent on practice drill, but a great deal on target practice and field firing. The shooting records show admirable results.

Prince Ferdinand's Guard Regiment of cavalry was next visited. The regiment is commanded by Lieutenant-Colonel Marholeff, and is the model cavalry regiment of the Bulgarian army, his Highness taking much personal interest in all that concerns the corps. The barracks rooms are remarkably light, airy, and scrupulously clean—certainly more comfortable for living purposes than are ordinary English barracks rooms. The walls were decorated with carefully chosen pictures of national historic interest, and with various instructional diagrams useful to keep before the eyes of the men. No cavalry officer could find fault with the stables, which compare more than favorably even with those of the British Household Cavalry. The regiment has three squadrons

during peace, two being horsed with Hungarian horses, and the third squadron with horses bred at the Government stud depots. Successful efforts have recently been made to improve the small, coarse, country-bred horses of Bulgaria by the introduction of English and Arab blood. The Bulgar is a foot-soldier by nature, and it will take time to develop the necessary equestrian spirit for the formation of an effective cavalry force; but much has been done in this direction during the past twenty years.

The 4th Field Artillery Regiment, composed of nine batteries, was next inspected; but owing to the lateness of the hour it was not possible to see the batteries manoeuvring. The horses were, however, seen on the picket lines, and the men at gun drill in a large open space, from which ranges to the surrounding hills could be taken. Although the executive instruction was being carried on by captains and lieutenants, the whole of the officers were present, including Colonel Koucheff the commander of the regiment. The drill was as unostentatious and realistic as that of the infantry, no attempt being made to produce effect. The Bulgarian artillery has recently been rearmoured with the French Creuzot (7.5 cm) quick-firing gun, the details of which are well known to British Artillery officers. A special feature of the equipment is the cover given to the gunners by the shield attached to the gun carriage, as well as to the men serving the ammunition from the limbers and wagons, which when in action are tilted into an upright position, thus affording an effective screen from infantry fire. Each gun has three attendant wagons, and carries 320 rounds with it into action. There is no better field gun in Europe than the Creuzot, unless exception be made in favor of the British gun, which has some undoubted points of superiority.

The war strength of the Bulgarian army must now be briefly considered. In estimating

this strength the figures of Captain Hugo Kerchnawe, of the Austro-Hungarian General Staff, have again been taken as a basis for inquiry. Nearly 80,000 young men annually reach the age of 21 in Bulgaria, and of these about 24,000 are taken by conscription for the full period of peace color service—nominally two years for the infantry and three years for the cavalry and artillery. After finishing their color service the men are kept for 18 years in the Reserve. This unusually long period of Reserve service gives the Bulgarian General Staff a large effective force of trained men for mobilization purposes. It is difficult to ascertain the exact strength of the Reservists owing to the wastage which is always going on; but a recent estimate published in an Austrian military journal, and verified as far as possible by the writer's inquiries, gives 380,000 as the number of men serving with the colors and in the Reserve. These men are all fully trained. After leaving the Reserve the men are passed into the Landwehr for six years, and would be available for active service in the event of a prolonged campaign. There are approximately 60,000 of these men, but without any sort of organization during peace.

How are these 380,000 men organized when mobilization is ordered?

Bulgarian territory is divided into nine divisional districts, with headquarters at the following strategic centres: Sofia (1st Division), Philippopolis (2nd Division), Sliven (3rd Division), Shumla (4th Division), Ruschuk (5th Division), Vratza (6th Division), Dubnitsa (7th Division), Eski Zagora (8th Division), Plevna (9th Division). Each of these divisions has two brigades (four regiments) of infantry and one artillery regiment of nine batteries, except the 2nd, 6th and 9th Divisions, whose artillery regiments only have six batteries. A cavalry regiment is also allotted to the first six divisions, and all have a full complement of administrative and technical troops, enabling the division when mobilized to take the field for an offensive campaign. The Bulgarians are properly reticent about mobilization details; but knowing the number of peace cadres, and the arrangements made for their expansion in time of war, it is quite possible to ascertain the war strength of each division with sufficient accuracy for the purpose of this article. That war strength may be stated as 20,000, giving an approximate total for the whole nine divisions of 180,000 officers and men, with 4,000 sabres and 430 guns. In addition to the above troops there is a separate cavalry division (2,500 sabres), and certain corps troops and units for the lines of communication, bringing the total mobilized strength of the Bulgarian field army up to 210,000 officers and men, with 7,000 cavalry and 500 guns. It is believed by Bulgarian officers that this force could be massed at fixed points of concentration on the frontier within 10 days of the order to mobilize. There would still remain 170,000 fully trained Reservists available to fill casualties, and form supplementary units, besides some 60,000 trained Landwehr men. If the above arrangements can be carried out as expected, they will reflect the highest credit on the Bulgarian General Staff, who will have achieved these remarkable results with only a population of 4,000,000 to work upon, and with only a peace military budget of £1,150,000.

Here for the moment it is necessary to leave the Bulgarian army, and cross the frontier into Turkey. The strategic situation as between Bulgaria and Turkey cannot be discussed until the strength of the Turkish army has been ascertained, and the frontier communications examined. Enough, however, has been said to enable some idea to be formed of the rapid progress which Bulgaria has made towards military efficiency since the consolidation of the Principality in 1885.

CHURCHILL'S LUCKY DAYS

Winston Churchill, like many other public men, has some pet superstitions, and one of them is that Saturday is the luckiest day in the week for him. If he can, he arranges all important affairs for that day, and Miss Hozier readily agreed that their wedding should be on a Saturday.

It was on a Saturday that Mr. Churchill was elected for Dundee, and that he gained northwest Manchester for Liberalism. It was on a Saturday that he accepted a place in the cabinet.

Furthermore, it was on a Saturday that he embarked for South Africa in 1899, where he was to win fame both as an officer and as a war correspondent. It was on a Saturday that at Oldham he opened his campaign against Mr. Broderick's scheme of army reform, and it was on Saturday, December 10, that he completed the rupture between himself and his old associates by helping a Liberal candidate for the first time in the Ludlow bye-election and by affirming that free traders of all parties must form a line of battle against a common foe.

A PROGRESSIVE CHINA WOMAN

Dr. Ida Kahn, a Chinese woman physician, who took her degree several years ago from the University of Michigan, has returned to take a post-graduate course in Johns Hopkins. Miss Kahn is a missionary for the Methodist Episcopal Church, and opened the city of Nanchang to missionaries, after it had been forbidden ground for some time. She accomplished this by curing the wife of Tantai Tao, the viceroy,

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